

HOUSE BILL 2214
By DuBois

AN ACT to name the bridge spanning Duck River on U.S. Highway 43 in Maury County in honor of the late Rear Admiral Fran McKee, United States Navy (Retired).

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor the memory of those courageous members of the United States Armed Forces who dedicated their careers to serving our nation, both in times of peace and war; and

WHEREAS, no person is more deserving of this honor than the late Rear Admiral Fran McKee, United States Navy (Retired), the first female line officer to be promoted to flag rank; and

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Tennesseans have continued this time-honored tradition of volunteerism through service in the United States Navy, and Tennessee is proud of Rear Admiral McKee's great contributions to the state's storied military history; and

WHEREAS, she graduated from the University of Alabama with a Bachelor of Science in 1950 and later earned a Master of Science in International Affairs from George Washington University; ever striving to improve herself professionally, she also attended the Naval War College School of Warfare, Naval Postgraduate School General Line School, and Naval Justice School Prospective Commanding Officer Course and received an honorary doctorate in public administration from the Massachusetts Maritime Academy; and

WHEREAS, Rear Admiral McKee was commissioned an Ensign in the U.S. Navy, on December 4, 1950, and served her country for more than thirty years before taking a well-

deserved retirement on June 1, 1981; her accomplishments are remarkable and truly historic; and

WHEREAS, during her career, she served with distinction at posts across the United States, as well as in Morocco and Spain; she developed an unsurpassed reputation for excellence and was a true pioneer in our nation's Navy; and

WHEREAS, Rear Admiral McKee was one of the first two women selected to attend the Naval War College, was the first woman to command an activity of the Naval Security Group Command, and was only the second woman ever to be promoted to flag officer, the first as a line officer; and

WHEREAS, the exceptional reputation of Rear Admiral McKee extended far beyond her naval peers due to her frequent professional interaction with the executive and legislative branches of the federal government, in which she represented the United States Navy with acumen and alacrity as the service's senior female officer; and

WHEREAS, the singular acumen of Rear Admiral McKee was celebrated through her receipt of countless awards, including the Legion of Merit with Gold Star, the Meritorious Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal with Bronze Star, the Sharpshooter Rifle Ribbon, and the Expert Pistol Medal; she also received civil honors that included the Daughters of the American Revolution's Medal of Honor, honorary citizenship from Maryland, and membership in the Alabama Academy of Honor; and

WHEREAS, Rear Admiral McKee's service to her nation and her profession did not end with her retirement, as she later served astutely as a member of the Armed Services YMCA of USA National Committee, Chair of the Legislative and Employment Committee of the VA Women's Advisory Committee for Veterans Affairs, and a member of the National Advisory Committee for Women in Military Service Memorial Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Rear Admiral McKee has long occupied a revered position in the history of our Nation and its Armed Forces, and she now rests in the hallowed ground of Arlington National Cemetery among her fellow courageous patriots who gave their all in defense of current and future citizens of this Nation; and

WHEREAS, she served with great bravery and ability and performed her duties with the utmost skill, dedication, and professionalism; her service can only be categorized as outstanding, and she has earned all honor and recognition that we could possibly bestow; and

WHEREAS, Admiral McKee's dedication to excellence in the military and her love of her family, her fellow naval officers and enlisted personnel, and her country stand as enduring examples of all the characteristics that have ensured the continued freedom of our nation and the preservation of its ideals over the course of our history; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly wishes to permanently commemorate the singular patriotism, courage, and commitment to duty of the late Rear Admiral Fran McKee, United States Navy (Retired); now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the bridge spanning Duck River on U.S. Highway 43 in Maury County is hereby designated as the "Admiral Fran McKee Memorial Bridge" in recognition of the bountiful life and peerless military career of the late Rear Admiral Fran McKee, United States Navy (Retired).

SECTION 2. The Department of Transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the bridge spanning Duck River on U.S. Highway 43 in Maury County as the "Admiral Fran McKee Memorial Bridge".

SECTION 3. The erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the cost of the manufacture and installation of such signs is paid to the department of transportation from non-state funds within one (1) year of the effective date of this act. Such payment shall be made prior to any expenditure by the state for the manufacture or installation of such signs. The department shall return any unused portion of the estimated cost to the person or entity paying for such signs within thirty (30) days of the erection of such signs. If the actual cost exceeds the estimated cost, an amount equal to the difference in such costs shall be remitted to the department in non-state funds within thirty (30) days of the sponsoring person or entity receiving an itemized invoice of the actual cost from the department.

SECTION 5. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.